PORTRAYAL OF RACISM AND GENDER VIOLENCE IN TONY MORRISON's FICTION- A STUDY

A Resume submitted to:

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Broad Topic:

AMERICAN LITERATURE/AFRO-AMERICAN LITERATURE

Title of the Topic:

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Introduction:

African American Literature is the body of literature produced in the United States by writers of African decent living in the United States of America. The Afro-American Literature mainly aims at narrating and exploring the socio-cultural and socio-political lives of Afro-Americans in the United States. The early Afro-American Literature begins with the arrival of African origin slaves in the US around 1639 and comprises of oral traditions, which focus on slavery, spiritualism, social and cultural lives of the slaves in the then time New World. The second Category can be claimed to comprise of writers such as Lucy Terry (1724-1821), Olaudah Equiano (1750-1797) Phillis Wheately (1753-1784), Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879 Harriet Jacob (1813-1897) Fredrick Douglass (1817-1895) and other major as well as minor writers, who mainly focused on racism, social discrimination and the lives of slaves. The major themes of this period were slave narratives and the struggle for getting the political and social freedom from slavery. The third category, the post Slavery period which appeared in 19th Century America can be claimed to begin with thirteenth Amendment in the U.S.Constitution introduced in 1865. The amendment abolished Slavery and involuntary Servitude. From 1865-1919 the literature focused on racial uplift and equal rights for all in the U.S. The major writers include Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), W.E.B.Du Bois (1868-1963), Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906) as well as the entire group of the Harlem Renaissance writers.

The pre and Post great depression writers continued the rich tradition of Afro-American literature. The writers like Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, and many others contributed to the corpus till the Civil Rights Movement in 1960. In 1970, the Afro-American Literature returns to the historical and social roots of Afro-American community and includes major women writers like Tony Morrison, Alice Walker and other notable writers who focus on narrating

the painful history of African –American Slavery. Their major aim of writing the slave experiences, racial abuse and social exploitation in the United States is their deep commitment to Afro American Society in the past and the present. While the entire Afro-American Literature mainly consists of narratives of the Racism, Slavery, Gender violence and Physical and Psychological exploitation of the Afro-Americans in the contemporary periods, the research Scholar wants to study Tony Morrison's fictions for exploring the problem of Racism and Gender Violence in American Society.

The Nobel laureate, TONY MORRISON (Chloe Ardelia Wofford) is one of the major writers in American Literature. Morrison is the first Afro-American Woman to win the Nobel Prize in 1993.She is a veteran Afro-American social activist, teacher, essayists and novelist and her works mainly focus on pleasures and paradoxes of being the Afro-American community members in America. Tony Morrison's literary creation, lectures and interviews mainly focus on the problems of racism, slavery, violence against the Afro-Americans, gender discrimination and the gender violence and other such like contemporary socio-cultural problems. Although the problem of racism and slavery has been legally ended in the American society, yet the racial abuse, gender discrimination and the Afro-American oppression still prevails in the so called American Society. Rather, these socio-cultural problems are getting more and more prominence in the contemporary social sphere around the world.

Therefore, the researcher wants to study the portrayal of racism, gender violence and various socio-cultural exploitation of the Afro-Americans in American Society for documenting the lives of the oppressed Afro-American people by closely examining Tony Morrison's eleven Novels: ***The Bluest Eye (1970), Sula (1973), Song of Solomon (1977), Tar Baby(1981), Beloved(1987),Jazz(1992) Paradise(1997),Love(2003),A Mercy(2008),Home (2012) and God Help the Child (2015).*** Moreover, Tony Morrison's *God Help the Child* (2015) is based on the lives of the Afro-American people in the Modern America (USA) wherein the characters are still living the racial abuse and social boycott. Although the problem of racism and violence against women has been the focus of research and writing in Humanities and the Social Sciences and the other research domains, the researcher wants to critically study the works of Tony Morrison for proving the contemporary relevance of researching the problems of Racism, Gender exploitation and the lives of the oppressed Afro-American classes in the society.

Aims and Objectives:

1. The proposed research aims at studying the problem of racism and social-cultural discriminatory tendencies present in the American Society.
2. The research would study gender violence and other social atrocities experienced by the Afro-American Community members.
3. The primary objective of the proposed research is to study Tony Morrison's fiction for critically analyzing the portrayal of racism and gender violence in Morrison's fiction.

Hypothesis:

1. The researcher assumes that **Tony Morrison**'s fiction/works portray the history of the Afro-American people and their consciousness.

2. The researcher perceives that Morrison's works narrate the experiences of racial abuse, servitude, physical and psychological exploitation and gender violence faced by the Afro-American Communities.

3. The major themes of Morrison's fiction written during 1970-2015 are racism and violence against Afro-American People.

Data, Scope and Limitations:

The researcher would consider Tony Morrison's fiction written during 1970-2015 as the primary sources of information. At the same time, the scope can be widened for any of Tony Morrison's fiction/works get published after 2015 which are in relevance to the researcher's area of study. The published literature on Tony Morrison and the earlier research would be considered as the secondary sources of information. While speaking of the limitations, the researcher is fully aware that Tony Morrison is still active in her literary creation and social activism and she may publish any work after 2015.

Research Methodology:

The textual analysis, descriptive and the historical methods in English literature research would be used/applied.

Justification for the Research:

The researcher proposes to study Tony Morrison's works for depicting/documenting the various social evils and forces of exploitation present in the society which support and justify

the racism, ethnocentrism, gender injustice, slavery, social discrimination and other such like issues. As these problems are still prevalent in the society and Tony Morrison, even in 2015, is still actively focusing her literary works on the themes of social oppression and discrimination. The researcher strongly feels that faces (Social systems, Cultural norms and Law) have been changed over the period of time for empowering the Afro-American community, but forces of exploitation (racism, gender abuse and injustices, Afro-American oppression) have remained the same even in the present American Society. Tony Morrison has been voicing these issues and experiences of Afro-American Community throughout her life. Moreover, Timothy Greenfield Sanders is releasing a Tony Morrison's new documentary "Tony Morrison: the Pieces I Am" in June 2019 and the documentary is based on her life experiences, works and career.

Pedagogical Implications:

The proposed research would be used in Undergraduate and the Post graduate courses in English Literature/American Literature. The research would further the study and research on Tony Morrison's works for understanding the lives of the Afro-American people who faced the racism, Gender violence, Slavery and physical and psychological exploitation in American society.

Tentative Chapterization:

Chapter 01 provides a brief introduction to Afro-American Literature.

Chapter 02: It comprises of a brief biography of Tony Morrison, a review of related research on Tony Morrison and the chapter two would focus on the nature and scope of the proposed research.

Chapter 03: This chapter would study the portrayal of the problem of racism and gender violence in the Novels of Tony Morrison Published between 1970 to 1980. It covers the study of *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), and *Songs of Solomon* (1977).

Chapter 04: This chapter covers the study of the following Morrison's fiction published between 1981 to 1991: *Tar Baby* (1981) and *Beloved* (1987).

Chapter 05: The chapter would focus on studying the following works of Morrison published between 1992 to 2002: *Jazz* (1992) and *Paradise* (1997).

Chapter 06: It covers study of Tony Morrison's works published between 2003 to 2015: *Love* (2003), *A Mercy* (2008), *Home* (2012) and *God Help the Child* (2015).

Chapter 07: the chapter would comprise of Conclusion and suggestions.

Although Tony Morrison's works have been studied and researched by many Indian and the international researchers, but the research mainly focuses on limited perspective to Morrison's works. Therefore, the researcher's raison d'être for choosing Tony Morrison's fiction is for studying the problem of racism and gender violence from multiple perspectives.

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